



MUMBAI

DYNAMIC ENGLISH

This issue on "Dynamic English" discusses forces that shape and change everyday English. Such forces could be cultural and international influences, such as words that come directly, or in a changed form from another language, to popular media, including movies, music and sports, to changes arising from technological developments.

When it comes to American English – as the American journalist H. L. Mencken understood perfectly – its resourcefulness depends on the invigorating presence of immigrants arriving in the nation from every corner of the world. If the country performs its functions properly, those immigrants, in a relatively short period of time, will acquire enough English-language skills to become part of the social mosaic. But their assimilation is never a one-way street. As immigrants become Americans, the United States is altered too by their presence. This interchange is particularly recognizable at the level of language. Just as the Irish, Scandinavian, and Jewish newcomers became fluent speakers, so did the nation's tongue incorporate voices, expressions, syntactical patterns, and other verbal dexterities they brought along with them. And the rest of the population embraced those elements.

Cultural and International Influences

How many words are there in the English language? According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), a total of more than 600,000. Each of us, of course, has the capacity to remember but a fraction. How many exactly? Depends on whom you ask. A person's vocabulary goes through a dramatic transformation in life: from a handful of words by a babbling baby and the jargon-driven repertoire of the teenager, to the displays used by adults in different settings (home, work, friends, etc.). In truth, the inventory of words is never set. It isn't only that as individuals we are constantly changing, but also that language as such isn't static. The OED, as a historical lexicon, keeps on growing. It includes more entries today than ever before. But a vast number of entries – they are called "voices" – are archaic, barely used today.

Other Influences on Language

The growth of the Latino minority in the United States, some 43 million strong according to 2005 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, is at a juncture, forging a unique identity. Spanglish, the mixing of Spanish and English, used indistinctly on the street, in classrooms, among politicians, on the religious pulpit, and, of course, on radio, television, and the Internet, is the most distilled manifestation of that identity.

All of which points out two opposing forces constantly at work on our language: ephemerality and durability. Only dead languages are static. Think of Aramaic, for example. Its use today is generally limited to scholars of history or religion. Hence, there's no need to come up with equivalents for "fax," "soft money," and "steroids." Its lexicon is stable. On the other hand, many modern languages (for example, Mandarin, English, Spanish, French, Russian, and Arabic) are in flux. To survive, they are constantly reaching out, importing foreign terms while, at the same time, exporting their database to other tongues. The large waves of migration of the modern world, along with the instant technology we've devised (television, radio, movies, the Internet), encourage verbal cross-fertilization. How many Germanic words does the English language contain? And how many Anglicisms are accepted in Spanish? The answer, again: a lot. The tension between the ephemeral and the enduring is the key to life: A language cannot be altered so much as to erase its core; but the core alone doesn't make the language vibrant.

Historically, the roots of Spanglish date back to the American colonial period, during which Iberian civilization left its imprint in Florida and the Southwest. Up until 1848, when Mexico sold almost two-thirds of its territory (Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Utah) to its neighbor, Spanish was the tongue of business and education. It interacted with aboriginal languages. With the arrival of Anglos, Spanish and English began a process of hybridization. This process was reinforced at the end of the 19th century with the advent of the Spanish-American War. Americans arrived in the Caribbean Basin, bringing English along with them.

Whereas Spanglish is also heard in various parts of the Hispanic world, from Catalonia in Spain to the Pampas in Argentina, it is in the United States where it has thrived. One is likely to hear it in rural areas, but it is in the major urban centers where Hispanics have settled – such as Los Angeles, California; San Antonio

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(Monday through Friday)

HOLIDAYS

October 2: Gandhi Jayanti
October 8: Columbus Day

A WORD FROM THE CENTER

Namaste from the American Center

by Lynne Gadkowski, Deputy Director



My first few weeks here in India have been exactly what I had imagined: an overwhelming kaleidoscope of sights and sounds of Western India. Mumbai and its surrounding areas are truly a thrill for any newcomer and are a delight to the five senses. What was unexpected, and what will perhaps continue to amaze me, is the

scale of things in India – from undergraduate university enrolment, to the number of taxis and auto rickshaws, to the numbers of commuters at our nearby Churchgate station. Perhaps most spectacular so far has been the Mumbai celebration of the Ganpati festival, complete with the drums, colors, lights, and wonderful curry aromas. The welcome to my new home has been tremendously warm and friendly.

The heart of our work at the American Center and the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Consulate General is to build relationships and dialogues with our Indian colleagues and counterparts. For me, this is truly an exciting focus and our programs, presentations, and exchanges follow a wide range of topics from jazz and cuisine to management and economic development. A special focus for us in the coming year will be to look at the U.S. elections within the shared tradition of electoral politics and democracy. Also, building on this theme of participatory democracy is the importance and tradition of civic engagement and volunteerism in the wider community. This spectrum of issues we cover is a real testament to the audiences and interests that we have in Western India and I look forward to hearing from our wider membership about their own interests in America.

This coming year we will also celebrate 50 years of the American Consulate in Lincoln House. It has been fun to find photos of VIP visits to Bombay of such notable Americans as Helen Keller and President Jimmy Carter; it is a unique retrospective and we plan to highlight this anniversary throughout the year. With peaked interest in studying in the U.S., and Indo-American relations at an all-time high, there is no limit to the role of the American Center. For those of you in Indore and the surrounding area, watch for announcements about the American Center's Road Show – we will be taking the Center on the road!

As a child growing up in a small seaside town on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, travel, culture, history, and politics were always my top school and extracurricular interests. I completed my undergraduate studies in Government, French, and International Relations at Cornell University, where I also played field hockey. My previous State Department assignments in Fiji, South Africa, New York at the UN and most recently London at the London School of Economics, have found me living alongside members of the international Indian community. It is great to now actually reside in India and draw on Hindi language training and increase my newfound appreciation of the range of delicious culinary delights and nimboo panis. In addition, we are reconnecting on a personal level with India. I am joined in India by my fiancé Kiron Nath, whose father grew up and studied in Agra before moving to England in his early professional career. In addition, Kiron's brother will be practicing medicine alongside his wife at the CMC in Vellore for the next year. As the saying goes, the world gets smaller and smaller.

On this personal note, let me close by saying a personal thank you to everyone at the American Center for the warm welcome to India. I look forward to working with everyone here while meeting and getting to know our wider Western India community.

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and Houston, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; Miami, Florida; and New York City – where its strongest influence is felt. However, there isn't one single Spanglish but different types: Chicano, Cuban, Puerto Rican, Dominican, etc. Its usage varies from one place to another and from generation to generation. A recent immigrant from Mexico in nearby El Paso, Texas, for instance, is likely to use certain elements that distinguish her from a second-generation Colombian-American in the northeastern state of New Jersey.

In general, there are three strategies all Spanglish speakers employ at some point: code-switching, whereby the alternating of elements from Spanish and English take place within the same sentence; simultaneous translation; and the coining of new terms that aren't found in either the *Oxford English Dictionary* or the *Diccionario de la Lengua Española*, for instance, "Wáchale!" for "Watch out!" and "rufo" for "roof."

How many words in the English language can you think of that are derived from Arabic? The immediate answer is, "Quite a few." Mosque and minaret, bedouin and sheikh, caliph and sultan, to name a few. Whether or not one knows any Arabic, it is safe to assume these words come from Arabic because they refer to Arab things as, of course, do the words camel, wadi and dhow.

In some cases, the English version of the word is as good as identical to its Arabic original, though others diverge in sound or meaning. Mosque doesn't sound much like *masjid*, and though we can use bedouin in the singular, it is in fact taken from *bidwan*, a plural form of *bedawi*. Dhow comes from *dawa*, though if you ask any of your Arabic-speaking friends, you'll find they don't know the word, as it's no longer in common use.

So far, no surprises. All the words mentioned refer to aspects of Arab or Islamic life, so naturally they are expressed in Arabic. But it may come as a surprise to learn that more familiar things, such as common fruits and vegetables, were once equally exotic. The fruits apricots, oranges, lemons, and limes, and the vegetables artichoke, spinach, and aubergine (eggplant) all have Arabic names, though they no longer taste or sound foreign. Lemon, for instance, came into medieval English from Middle French and before that from Middle Latin – with very little change in pronunciation in the process from the Arabic *laymun*. Artichoke, on the other hand, is hardly recognizable as coming by way of Italian from the Arabic *al-khurshuf*.

Arab-Islamic civilization was at its height during the Middle Ages, and for 500 years or so, Arabic was the language of learning, culture, and intellectual progress. Most of the classical Greek scientific and philosophical treatises were translated into Arabic during the ninth century. From this groundwork, Arab scholars, scientists, physicians, and mathematicians made great advances in learning that were then passed on to western Europe via the Islamic universities in Spain. For example, we owe the decimal system of computation to Arab mathematicians, based as it is on the Indian concept of zero – a word that, like its synonym cipher, comes from the Arabic *sifr*, meaning empty.

Arabic learning was widespread in medieval England from the 11th to the 13th century, and indeed beyond. Abelard of Bath, then one of the foremost scholars in Europe, translated the astronomical tables of al-Khwarizmi from Arabic into Latin in the early 1100s. Two common mathematical terms entered the language in this way: algebra and algorithm. The latter word is taken from al-Khwarizmi's name itself, while algebra comes from *al-jabr*, meaning "the reunion of broken parts," a word that features in one of al-Khwarizmi's mathematical treatises, *Hisab al-Jabr w' al-Muqabala*.

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Curiously enough, both the Arabic *al-jabr* and the English word algebra also refer to the surgical treatment of fractures or bone-setting. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, which lists definitions according to historical usage, gives the first meaning of algebra as “the surgical treatment of fractures” and quotes a citation from 1565: “This Araby worde Algebra sygnifyeth as well fractures of bones, etc. as sometye the restauration of the same.”

The words talisman and elixir originate in Arabic alchemy, and the word almanac (*al-manakh*) comes from Arabian astronomy. Other technical words include caliper, caliber, aniline, marcasite, and camphor. We weigh precious stones in carats and measure paper in reams thanks to Arabic: *Girat* is a small unit of weight; *rizmah* is a bale or bundle.

The preponderance of technical and scientific terms entering English from Arabic during the Middle Ages suggests accurately enough the general superiority of Arab-Islamic civilization in the area of scientific achievement during this period. Revealing too is the fact that the next broad category of Arabic words suggests an advantage in terms of luxury and creature comforts and, consequently, a higher standard of living.

There is a parallel richness suggested by the names of such exotic fineries as sash, shawl, sequin, muslin, mohair, damask, and cotton. Of these, muslin takes its name from Mosul in Iraq, where it was made, whereas sash is a variation of the Arabic for muslin, *shash*. The fabric damask, as one might expect, comes from Damascus. Even the word tabby, which we now apply to cats of a certain pattern, has its origin in a striped silk taffeta that was made in the al-Tabiyya district of Baghdad. The word sequin has its origin in Arabic *sikkah*, meaning a minting die for striking coins.

Sofa, alcove, jar, and carafe – each suggestive in some way, of comfortable living – have also been borrowed from Arabic: sofa comes from *suffah* (a long bench); alcove from *al-qubbah* (the arch); jar from *jarrah* (an earthen water vessel); carafe from *gharrafa* (bottle). Our vocabulary has also been enriched by the colors crimson, carmine, azure, and lilac, all of whose names are derived from Arabic. And as for leisure activities, there are such words as racket, as in tennis racket, from the Arabic *raha*, “the palm of the hand.”

There are many other interesting words – adobe, crocus, genie, and popinjay, for example – that are all more or less garbled versions of Arabic words. Even the word “garbled” itself can be traced to Arabic, coming as it does from *gharbala* meaning “to sift or select,” with reference to spices for sale, and shifting its meaning from there to the idea of mixing and confusing. But garbled or not, the store of words derived from Arabic has greatly enriched the English language.

English is a dynamic and changing language. Because of the nature of the language, words and phrases are constantly being added or subtracted. “Carbon neutral” was added to last year’s edition of the *New Oxford American Dictionary* and named “word of the year” because of the concern about climate change. “Blog,” “to blog,” and “blogging” have entered the common lexicon. This dynamism is also true for idiomatic or metaphorical language and its use in the United States.

We have excerpted the above article from “Dynamic English” an electronic journal published by the U.S. Department of State. Should you wish to read the full journal, it is available on the following web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals/itsv/0807/ijse/ijse0807.htm>

NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

A Select Webliography Related to English Language Learning

<http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1>
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages

<http://www.eslcafe.com/>
Dave’s ESL Cafe

<http://exchanges.state.gov/forum/>
U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs – English Teaching Forum

<http://www.m-w.com/>
Merriam-Webster Online

<http://www.nabe.org/>
National Association for Bilingual Education

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/>
National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs

<http://www.ncte.org/>
The National Council of Teachers of English

<http://www.pbs.org/speak/>
Public Broadcasting Service – American English

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/eslteacher.html>
Purdue University – Online Writing Lab – ESL Resources for Teachers

http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/index.asp
Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.

<http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/>
U.S. Department of State – Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs – Office of English Language Programs

<http://etext.virginia.edu/collections/subjects/#english>
University of Virginia Library – English Online Resources

<http://www.dyned.com/voa/>
Voice of America Radio English Course

The American Library has established a special collection of resource materials on English, called the “ESL (English as a Second Language) Lab,” aimed at promoting the teaching of American English. This collection is available for students of English, and would be of particular help to educators seeking to improve their language-teaching skills. The ESL collection consists of 600 books, multimedia kits, videos, audio cassettes and CD-ROMs.

The American Library also provides current, reliable and comprehensive information on contemporary American politics, government, economics and trade, the rule of law and a wide range of global issues. It has extended its hours of operation on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and is now open 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. It offers free Internet surfing to its members and the daily visit fee has also been waived.

Note: Internet sites included in this listing, other than those of the U.S. Government, should not be construed as an endorsement of the views contained therein.

MUMBAI MONDAYS

**A Discussion on
Modern Dance in the U.S.
led by Bindi Patel**

Monday, October 15

American Center Auditorium

6:00 p.m.

Modern dance in the U.S. evolved at the turn of century breaking away from the pure, structured movement of classical ballet. Modern dance innovators such as Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham went on to form dance companies and create their own dance styles. During the mid 1900s, African-American dancers also formed modern dance companies, incorporating themes of African-American life and history into their dance performances. Modern dance is intricately linked to the music and it continues to evolve to incorporate current themes in American life.

Bindi Patel joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 2005 and served her first tour as a political officer in Monrovia, Liberia, from 2005-2007. She currently serves at the U.S. Consulate in Mumbai. Before joining the Foreign Service, Ms. Patel worked for the U.S. Defense Department as a research assistant at the Institute for National Strategic Studies located in the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. From 1999-2002, she worked and studied in Italy and Switzerland. She earned her B.A. in Communication Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1995, and an M.A. in International Relations from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in 2003. Ms. Patel has been studying dance since age 10, including ballet, jazz, tap, modern, West African, and hip-hop. Ms. Patel is from California.

FILMS THIS MONTH

Friday, October 19

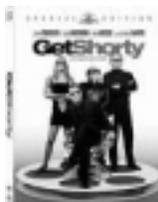
Friday, October 26

Get Shorty (1995, color, 105 mins)

Speechless (1994, color, 120 mins)

American Center Auditorium

3:30 and 6:30 p.m.



John Travolta is a slick loan shark from Miami whose search for a dry cleaner who took \$300,000 in mob money leads him to Hollywood and debt-ridden "B" movie producer Gene Hackman. The two try to make a movie together while battling crooks, creeps and arrogant actors. Rene Russo, Danny DeVito, Dennis Farina, Delroy Lindo and Bette Midler costar in this terrific Elmore Leonard story.

The old adage "politics makes strange bedfellows" is given a comedic twist in this romantic tale featuring Michael Keaton and Geena Davis as rival speechwriters on opposite sides of the political fence who wind up falling in love. Bonnie Bedelia and Christopher Reeve costar.



U. S. ELECTIONS 2008



2008 CANDIDATES

Republican Candidates

Sam Brownback
Rudy Giuliani
Mike Huckabee
Duncan Hunter
John McCain
Ron Paul
Mitt Romney
Tom Tancredo
Fred Thompson

Democratic Candidates

Joe Biden
Hillary Rodham Clinton
Chris Dodd
John Edwards
Mike Gravel
Dennis Kucinich
Barack Obama
Bill Richardson

Biographic details of each of the above candidates are available on
http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/democracy/elections/candidates_and_parties.html

E-mail your queries about the U.S. presidential elections to libref@state.gov

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Admission to all American Center programs, restricted to persons over 16, will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Please bring the envelope containing this issue of the bulletin for admission (maximum two persons). The auditorium doors will open 30 minutes before the start of the program.
